

BARENT STRYKER.

[To accompany bill H. R. No. 490.]

JUNE 10, 1842.

Mr. J. G. FLOYD, from the Committee on the Post Office and Post Roads,
submitted the following

REPORT :

The Committee on the Post Office and Post Roads, to whom it was referred by the resolution of the House of Representatives of May 24, 1842, to inquire into the expediency of authorizing the Postmaster General to make an additional allowance to Barent Stryker for carrying the mail on route No. 923, in the State of New York, respectfully report :

It appears that, on the 12th day of March, 1841, a bid was made in writing by Barent Stryker to carry the mail from Schoharie, in the State of New York to Durham, twenty-four miles, three times a week, for four years, from the 1st of July then next, for the sum of \$210 a year. At the same time a bid was made by Peter W. Stryker to carry the mail from Pottsville to Claresville, sixteen miles, once a week for the same length of time, for \$1,444 a year.

On the 10th of May, Barent Stryker writes to the Postmaster General as follows: "I received your letter stating that my bid for a stage route from Schoharie to Durham had been accepted for \$210." He proceeds to say that the sum he intended was \$1,445; that the two bids above mentioned were drawn up at the same time by the same person, and that the sums were inserted in the wrong bids by mistake; asks what course he must take, and if the Department intends to hold him to his bid; says he would carry the mail, although the bid was a mistake, if the sum was anything like a compensation; and inquires whether he may be allowed to let the time go by without putting in bail. To this letter no answer appears to have been returned, but the paper contract at \$210 a year, and the bond, were sent to him by the Department, which, on the 19th of June, were duly executed and returned. There were eight other bids for the route, bid for by Barent Stryker, varying from \$920, the highest, to \$495, the lowest. Barent Stryker swears that he intended his bid to be about \$1,400; that he was surety on a bid of Peter W. Stryker, which he understood to be \$210, and that he cannot carry the mail for his contract price; that, after notifying the Department of the mistake and receiving no answer, he signed the contract, supposing that he was obliged to do so or suffer a heavy penalty, and that he would not have taken the route at that price but for fear of making trouble.

Peter W. Stryker swears that he drew the two proposals above mentioned, and that the sums were, by mistake, put into the wrong contracts.

Lewis Gifford swears that he was present when the proposals were drawn, and the sum to be put into Barent Stryker's proposal was about \$1,400.

Six of the postmasters on the route certify that they "believe that \$210 is by no means a fair compensation," and that the mail has been carried in "good order" since the contract went into effect. All the papers before the committee, and by which the above facts appear, were received from the Post Office Department.

The committee, fully convinced that the facts hereinabove set forth are true, recommend that authority be given to the Postmaster General to allow Barent Stryker, at the rate of \$495 a year, for the time that he has carried, and may hereafter carry, the mail under his present contract, and that he also have authority, at any time, to re-let the said route; and they report a bill for that purpose.